Foreword

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The Mute Immortals Speak: Pre-Islamic Poetry and the Poetics of Ritual is a vital new entry in the Myth and Poetics series, which is committed to the exploration of interaction between myth and ritual in the poetics of traditional societies. Combining various approaches derived from anthropology and literary theory, this book examines from a comparative perspective one of the most difficult and challenging genres in Arabic literature, the pre-Islamic *qaṣīdah*. Suzanne Stetkevych's application of a wide range of reading and research in this area has made it possible for specialist and nonspecialist alike to grasp the mythic dimension of Arabic poetics—a dimension largely overlooked in previous scholarly writings on the subject. What is more, the author succeeds in showing the importance of the tradition of the Arabic *qaṣīdah* for comparative research on the nature of lyric.